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His Excellency
Ronald W. Reagan
The President of the United States of America
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President,

In connection with your letter I would like to express some thoughts in continuation of our exchange of views with you.

I, of course, took note of the pledge of commitment to the lessening of tensions between our countries made by you in the handwritten addition to your letter. In turn, I can affirm once again what I wrote in my first letter to you -- namely, that it has been and continues to be our wish that there be a turn toward steady, good relations between the USSR and the USA. As a matter of fact, the numerous specific proposals submitted by our side, including those proposals put forward in my letters to you, have been aimed at reaching that very objective.

As regards interpreting a certain period in the history of our relations, about which you had already written once before, here our views differ. We have presented our point of view in this regard, so I will not repeat myself. I will note, however, that one side's having military superiority or seeking such superiority cannot be perceived by the other side as an indication of good intentions. There can be only one indication -- a willingness to conduct affairs as equals, a willingness reflected in practical policies. The position of the Soviet Union in this regard is clear and precise: we are not seeking superiority, but we will not allow superiority over us. I do not see anything here that should be unacceptable to the United States, if one wants stability and a lessening of tensions. It is from a position of equality that it is possible to agree on really mutually-acceptable solutions, when neither side can have reason to believe that it is making unilateral concessions.

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I thought it necessary to point this out, having in mind the way in which the intentions of the Soviet Union are interpreted in your letter. I cannot agree with this. This has already been stated on our side in the past. But since you return again to the question of intentions and how they can be perceived, I will express a few opinions, illustrating them with specific examples.

If one is to sum up what on many occasions has been publicly stated by you and other representatives of the Administration, one concludes that the only situation that would be acceptable to the United States would be one in which it was militarily ahead of the USSR. The fact of the matter, however, is that such a situation has not been and is not acceptable to us. In this respect we have experience -- bitter experience. The history of our relations, especially in the postwar period, has seen quite a few complications too. Quite a few attempts have been made to exert political, economic, and even military pressure on us.

Let us take the current situation. There is, it seems, an American idiom "to turn the table." Try to look at the realities of the international situation from our end. And at once one will see distinctly that the Soviet Union is encircled by a chain of American military bases. These bases are full of nuclear weapons. Their mission is well known -- they are targeted on us. Nothing like it can be found around your country.

And what about the fact that entire regions of the globe have been proclaimed spheres of American vital interests? And not only proclaimed, but made the object of a U.S. military presence. And this is done, among other places, at our very doorstep. And again we, for our part, are not doing anything

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like it. What conclusions should we draw from this as to the intentions of the U.S.? I believe the conclusions readily present themselves. Such an approach is nothing other than a hypertrophied idea of one's interests in which the legitimate interests of others are completely ignored, an effort to gain, to put it mildly, positions of privilege at the expense of the other side. This approach is not compatible with the objective of ensuring stability. On the contrary, such an approach as a matter of policy objectively helps to create and sustain tensions.

Or let us take strategic arms. Here, too, no claims can be directed toward the Soviet Union. The fact that there is rough parity between the USSR and the USA and, in a wider sense, between the Warsaw Pact and NATO, can be disputed by no expert familiar with the situation. The SALT-2 Treaty was a reflection of this fact. It was not the end of the road, and we did not consider it as such. But the merit of the treaty was, among other things, that it established, I would say, with mathematical precision the strategic balance that has evolved.

Your military experts can tell you that the Soviet Union has done nothing to upset this balance. At the same time we see what kind of attitude is displayed toward the Treaty by the other side. Is it not the criterion by which to judge its intentions?

The same applies as well to medium-range nuclear forces in Europe. I will recall only that it was we who offered to reduce their number to the minimum on the side of the USSR and NATO. In response, "Pershings" and cruise missiles are appearing near our borders. How would you regard it, Mr. President, had something similar happened with respect to the U.S.? I believe

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that your assesment of the intentions of the other side under the circumstances could only be one -- as regards both the other side's approach to negotiations and the essence of its intentions.

But even under these circumstances we have displayed and continue to display utmost restraint. The response we were forced to take, in terms of its scope and character, has not gone beyond the limits necessary to neutralize the threat posed to us and our allies. Moreover, we propose to return to the initial situation and, instead of further unleashing an arms race, to address ourselves in a decisive fashion to curbing the arms race, and to radically limiting and reducing nuclear arms. This is far from imposing conditions. As a matter of fact, what is unfair about the two sides cancelling those measures whose effect was to heighten the level of nuclear confrontation and, conversely, to lessen global security? There can be nothing unfair or damaging for either side in this. A return to the previous situation in the present circumstances would constitute forward movement by both sides toward stabilizing the situation, toward the practical renewal of the entire process of limiting nuclear weapons that is of decisive importance for the future of international relations and for peace as such.

So far, however, we see no indication that the American side proceeds from such an assumption. Regrettably, nothing new on this major issue of the day can be found in your letter either. I say this not for the sake of polemics, but rather in the hope that you will still find it possible to appreciate the way out of the extremely grave situation that we are suggesting.

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From my correspondence with you, Mr. President, as well as from previous correspondence, one can conclude that, in general terms there seems to be an understanding on your part that there are a number of important questions concerning the problem of security which require solutions and where joint efforts by our two countries are necessary.

For my part, in my last message I specifically mentioned several of these questions. Let me remind you that these included renouncing the construction of large-scale anti-ballistic missile defense systems, entering into negotiations on preventing the militarization of outer space and on banning anti-sattelite weapons, a freeze on nuclear weapons, resuming talks on a complete and comprehensive ban on nuclear tests, and some other measures. In other words, we are not for dialogue in a general sense between our two countries, but propose to fill it with concrete, weighty substance. We are convinced that practical movement in these and other directions and mutual determination to achieve practical results would fundamentally ease the situation in our relations and throughout the world in general. The degree of trust would increase significantly.

But we have not received a response to these proposals that would enable us to say that the United States is prepared for such concrete actions. I will not make a judgment as to what is the problem here, but I am convinced that, seriously speaking, there is no good reason and, moreover, no justification for avoiding the solution of problems that can play a decisive role in determining the road the world will take in the near future. Awareness of this is growing on the part of the public and the leaders of many states. Graphic evidence of this is the recent appeal by the leaders of six countries from four continents to the governments of the nuclear powers. Mr. President, this

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appeal is a very serious reminder, to our countries as well, of the enormous responsibility they bear for the destinies of the world and mankind. Our common duty is to respond to this appeal honestly, without delay, and through concrete actions. For its part, the Soviet Union is prepared for it.

In addition to those of our proposals already mentioned, I would also like to draw your attention to additional areas of possible cooperation in the interests of strengthening peace. One of these is the limitation of naval activity and naval armaments. This problem is very urgent; it is no coincidence that the United Nations has attached such importance to it as well. We have specific ideas on what could be done to reduce the growing tensions on the high seas, to ensure freedom of navigation and the safety of international sea communications. We have spoken in favor of discussing this problem within the framework of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament or in separate multilateral negotiations. Taking into account the role of our countries, we also propose to discuss this set of questions on a bilateral basis. We would like to know your opinion on this score.

Furthermore, the Warsaw Pact countries recently made a proposal to NATO countries to begin multilateral consultations on the subject of concluding a Treaty on mutual non-use of military force and the maintenance of peaceful relations. The essence and the importance of the idea of such a Treaty are well known. Attention to this proposal has been growing from the moment of its introduction. And here our two countries could also play an important part. We are ready to study any ideas the American side might have on this question.

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The Soviet Union will, furthermore, do everything in its power to promote agreements on the problem of banning chemical weapons and on the reduction of armed forces and armaments in Central Europe. Our delegations in Geneva and Vienna will be prepared to cooperate with American representatives. It goes without saying that, within the framework of these fora, we shall also express in detail our views on recent positions advanced by the American side. However, I have to note that the overall impression -- and not only ours -- is that these positions do not constitute a constructive contribution to the work already done in these fora.

Recently the Soviet Union introduced at the Stockholm conference a concrete and carefully balanced document directed at attaining a really significant agreement, which would fundamentally strengthen security on the European continent. In preparing this document, we took into account the opinions expressed at the first round of the conference as well as in the course of bilateral consultations, including those with American representatives. We would like to expect that in Stockholm the United States will take a position that would make possible agreement on mutually acceptable solutions.

As it has already been pointed out on our part in correspondence with you, we favor a bilateral exchange of opinions on regional matters. Our Ambassador is instructed to present to the Secretary of State more specific considerations on these and some other matters. Here I find it necessary to stress the main point: the need for restraint, for refraining from actions -- no matter what their motives -- which could only intensify dangerous tensions in various regions and make difficult the achievement of a just political settlement. The world has proven more than once that it is a hundred times more difficult to extinguish a fire than to prevent it. To remember this is in everyone's interests.

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I do not want to conclude this letter on a negative note, but in view of some of the remarks in your letter, I must point out that introduction into relations between states of questions concerning solely domestic affairs of our country or yours does not serve the task of improving these relations -- if this is our goal. I wish questions of such a nature did not burden our correspondence, which both of us, as I understand it, value.

Sincerely,

K. Chernenko

Moscow
June 6, 1984

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talking points

First. I would like to draw your attention to the fact that the solution of major questions, including new ones, set forth in the message of K.U.Chernenko would be of principal importance from the point of view of improving the Soviet-American relations and the international situation in general. Thus we again confirm in the practical way the line toward conducting a businesslike exchange of views with the Government of the United States with the aim of achieving constructive agreements on a wide range of issues in the Soviet-American relations. It concerns both the questions of strengthening security and ending the arms race as well as the area of bilateral relations.

Up till now, however, the American side acts in such a way that we do not see its readiness to go forward in practice to improving our relations, though quite a few words about such readiness have been said recently. The repeated promises to do something positive are not followed by anything tangible as yet.

At the same time it is often said that the American side allegedly introduces some concrete proposals, but the Soviet side reacts to them negatively. It is stated even as if we consciously counteract to some constructive efforts by the Administration and do not want progress in our relations. It is obvious for us that the situation is just the opposite. It is not clear, however, why a deliberately false impression is created, if, indeed, there is a desire to find a common language.

It is known, by whose initiative the Soviet-American relations were brought to such a mediocre shape. If an unbiased approach is used, there cannot be two opinions. Nevertheless, not once we proposed to revive our relations and to fill them with concrete contents. These questions have been discussed with the Secretary of State many times.

If businesslike views in this regard were expressed by the American side,--and promises of such nature were given many times,--then, by all means, we would consider them with due attention.

We wish only that it could be something specific and not simply symbolics presented as something positive in the way of formal extension of some agreements which are in fact not

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negotiations should be discussed through the diplomatic channels. In other words now the question is this: is the American side prepared to solve this urgent problem, which long ago has already gone because of its importance beyond the framework of the Soviet American relations only?

A proposal has been introduced by the Soviet side that both sides should reject the very idea of developing and deploying large-scale antiballistic missile defense systems. We would be ready to discuss the means of realization of this proposal - for example to discuss the substance and the form of appropriate statements, the order of making them public, etc.

Our position with regard to the question of the treaties of 1974 and 1976 on the limitation of underground nuclear explosions is also clear. The treaties were carefully worked out including the part concerning control. They were signed and should be put in force. There is no necessity in any additional interpretation of any provisions of the treaties. The questions, should the sides have them in the future as the treaties are in force, could be considered and solved in accordance with relevant provisions of those treaties themselves. The issue now is only whether the American side is or is not willing to ratify these treaties. We favor doing this and as far as possible without further delay.

The Soviet side attributes great significance to the banning of chemical weapons, to the reduction of the armed forces and the armaments in Central Europe. These questions must be solved. Our specific considerations in connection with the latest proposals of the United States concerning these questions will be stated by the Soviet representatives at the appropriate forums.

However, it may be said even now that the American position, unfortunately, does not give hope. We would like to think that the American side will properly take into account those observations and remarks which we and not only we shall express in Geneva and Vienna. There the Soviet delegations will be ready to maintain contact with the American side as before.

As for discussing these questions in some other manner, now there is no basis for that in view of the character of the latest American proposals.

Third. Regional problems. We repeatedly expressed our readiness to discuss with the American side regional problems named by it and other ones.

In this connection we are prepared to listen to the possible considerations of the American side in response to what has already been said by us on the South of Africa, and also on the situation in the Middle East and on the conflict between Iran and Iraq. In the future, depending on the progress made, we could agree to hold certain special meetings of our representatives as well. We do not exclude this.

As we have already pointed out, it is especially important that restraint be shown, no actions which could exacerbate the situation be taken. This concerns the above mentioned as well as other regions.

Fourth. The Soviet side intends in the nearest future to propose the date of the next round of negotiations on the convention line in the Bering sea. We expect that the American side has analyzed the results of the previous round and could take the position which would enable us to come to a just and mutually acceptable solution of this question.

We also intend to convey in the near future our views concerning the negotiations on cooperation in the search and rescue operations in the Northern part of the Pacific ocean.